



PHOTO: BOB LEE

PHOTO: LINDA M. BARRETT

Susan McConnell and her team hosted the first Let It Be Us gala in Chicago this year. QB's recent cover photo shows her with three adopted children who live in the area.

# Illinois Foster Care and Adoption

HOW LET IT BE US IS CHANGING THIS VITAL LANDSCAPE

AT LET IT BE US we have designed programming to increase the number of licensed foster and adoptive parents in Illinois and, as we are poised to scale, we recently received private funding to do so. Over the next year, we are introducing new events in Barrington and Chicago that are smaller and intimate in nature, and designed to fit the particular needs of those attending, whether they are new to foster care and adoption, or whether they already have a license and are in search of children to parent.

We're hosting informative monthly "Fireside Chats on Foster Care and Adoption" at Barrington's White House. These events are funded through a generous grant from the Barrington Area Community Foundation.

In Chicago, we're hosting our monthly "Chicago Series on Foster Care and Adoption" at different locations throughout the city. These events are generously funded through a grant from a private source.

We've also designed a proprietary in-house tracking system that is sharable, in the cloud, and protected. It's a space where our recruiters

and coaches can share our work, learn from each other, and keep track of the people we recruit and coach to licensure. It's an innovative way to work in a space that has been widely ignored by entrepreneurs and business leaders.

...THIS IS SO IMPORTANT BECAUSE ILLINOIS RANKS AS ONE OF THE LOWEST IN THE NATION AT ACHIEVING PERMANENCY AND ADOPTION FOR ITS WAITING CHILDREN.

To accomplish this work, we have added to our staff. We've welcomed Administrative Coordinator, Jeri Bark; Director of Strategy and Development, Alex Montgomery; and Director of Resource and Development, Ross Cochran. These new staffers have a deep background in nonprofits, fundraising, development, and operations. We've also added one more Foster Care Licensing Recruiter and Coach who has a deep personal and professional background in Illinois foster care and adoption.

These new staff members join our current Director of Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment, Mary Jo Cusack, and our Foster Care and Adoptive Parent Recruitment and Grants Administrator, Lisa Hanson-Braun.

Personally, I have a professional background in human resources and recruiting. Establishing this well-rounded and robust team has been a dream of mine because together we are bringing a strong and experienced force to solve some of the biggest problems in Illinois foster care and adoption. This is so important because Illinois ranks as one of the lowest in the nation at achieving permanency and adoption for its waiting children.

Please join us to become a foster or adoptive parent and/or to attend or volunteer at one of our fundraisers. You are always welcome to become one of "Us" in Let It Be Us! Visit our website at [www.letitbeus.org](http://www.letitbeus.org).

*Let It Be Us Founder and Executive Director, Susan McConnell, is a long-time resident of Barrington and the parent of children who came to her family through adoption.*